some sense better, than the old; and no doubt it is so in the judgment of those who erect it. But may they not be mistaken? With regard to the decorations of the last century, every one at once answers, "Yes;" and there is no doubt of the fact.

But may not the restorer be mistaken in his judgment also? In his estimate of the comparative beauty of the old half-worn work and his own new sharply cut carvings? It is possible he may be mistaken. He may not be able to believe this: no, nor any of his friends and associates either; but the next generation may judge differently, and, comparing his work, not with that which it replaced—that is destroyed,—but with others of the same age, it may perhaps condemn him as much as we now condemn our fathers.

I am now only considering the matter as a comparison of beauty: in this light, then, it is a thing to be decided by careful comparison and examination, by persons of proper taste, which is the most beautiful. Now, the most that we can do is to obtain the judgment of the present age upon this matter. This will not of course be unanimous, but still I suppose the general judgment of the age may be arrived at if pains are taken.

But even then the question arises, is this judgment correct? Let us not be too certain. We can see in many ages past an utter inability to appreciate various works of art; let us not be too certain we are right.

The restorer unfortunately does not think of this at all; for he is under the pleasing delusion, that because his work is of the same style and pattern as what he destroyed, and even, as he believes, the exact fac-simile of what that was when it was first put up, it is not a new piece of work at all. He cannot, therefore, see that there is any comparison to be made at all. Other persons, however, are not so deluded; they can see that the new doorway of the Temple Church, for example, is no more the same as the old one than the Hampton-court cartoons would be if some painter, no matter whether an R.A. or the most tasteless dauber, were to wash off the faces on them and repaint them himself.

The comparison, however, must be made, and we must not let any specious name of restoration, or any feeling of veneration, or any false kindness towards those who, at great personal sacrifice, perhaps, and with great labour, have made the change, hinder us from boldly forming our opinion, and carefully trying to arrive at a true judgment. And if we find that, to the best of our judgment, the new work is not so beautiful as the old, we must diligently set ourselves to prevent such an alteration in future—such a robbery, I might say, for though of course unintentional, such it really seems, as much as if a person were to come into my house and wilfully break to pieces a marble chimney-piece, and replace it by a stone one; or smash a beautiful vase of coloured Bohemian glass, and replace it by a plain earthenware one.

Considering the question, then, as one of merely comparative beauty, we cannot be so sure that the renovated works of our age (I will not call them restored) are more beautiful than those which they have replaced. However, in making the comparison in any churches that the reader may know, one thing must be observed: we must, before we begin to compare, remove from the churches every thing which does not belong to the Middle Ages—every thing inserted after the beginning of the sixteenth century; for the exceptions are so rare, we do not mind passing a sweeping condemnation upon all these works; all the rest is to remain untouched. It is, therefore, with the old churches so far abstracted, that we are to compare the present renovations.

The comparison in such cases is certainly a difficult one to make fairly with regard to the whole buildings, for in the one case every thing is new, sharp, shining, and of one design; in the other, old works are mixed with the disfigurements caused by removing; but these places should be filled up with new work of such a kind as least to attract notice, or at any rate not to draw off the attention from the others. However, let the comparison at any rate be attempted; let it be remembered that the new is new, and the old, old; and let us judge as we usually do in cases of comparative beauty and merit: it will not be universally found that the new is the most beautiful.

I think, then, we can easily agree to this, that the remains of mediæval art in our churches (supposing them to be not ruinous) are not to be removed and replaced by our own productions unless these latter are actually more beautiful than the old.

But the very stating of this will convince every one that it does not go half far enough. Just apply it to the paintings in the National Gallery. Who would dare to make such a proposition? "That the 'Raising of Lazarus,' or Murillo's 'Holy Family,' is not to be destroyed or repainted with something new, unless we can be sure the new painting will be more beautiful." Why, we do not even let any one clean the dirt off them for fear of washing down some little fragments of colouring. We should say to a person who offered to do any thing of that sort,—"If you think you can paint a picture, either a copy or an original design, as beautiful as these, do it by all means: we will value it, and thank you too for your pains. But there is plenty of canvas to be had, and plenty of room to hang your pictures in, or if not we will make room. But as for our old pictures we will not part with them; we know their beauty, and as, long as by any means possible, they can be held together, no one shall dare to touch them."

Why is not the same reasoning to apply to churches? "Because," perhaps, "they are not meant for the preservation of curiosities." No more is a gallery of paintings: it is meant for nourishing a love and perception of beauty in the soul. When a picture is so far worn away as no longer to be beautiful, then perhaps it should be removed into a museum of curiosities, and its place supplied by one that is beautiful. And surely the same rule may apply to the works of sacred art in churches. If the carvings on the capitals or bosses, or the paintings on the walls, or any other of the ornaments of the original church are worn so smooth as no longer to be beautiful, or to retain a trace, a legible and visible trace, of their meaning, then let them be removed, but not till then. Let them be removed into a museum, and preserved as curiosities; or even if they are entirely destroyed we will not care, for perishable works cannot be made to last for ever.

Is not, then, this a reasonable conclusion that as long as any piece of architecture is really beautiful it ought to be preserved? To destroy it or to remake it is an actual abolition of a beautiful thing.

This will not tend to quench ecclesiastical art; it will only preserve to us those models from which we have learnt it, and from which the next generations will learn it much better than from our copies, however good we may think them.

But those whose minds are filled with an idea of beauty, whose hands are eager to work it out, or who are wishing to patronise art, and to adorn churches, will find plenty of opportunity and plenty of space for all they can do. There are hundreds of new churches building and to be built, which will need their care. Or in the old churches there is plenty of room for their generous works without first removing those of former ages. Perhaps the new will not seem to accord well with the old, but that is an evil which every year will diminish, and, at any rate, both will be beautiful, and it is certainly better than having all new.

SERVATOR.

MASONRY AND STONE-CUTTING IN FRANCE.

DURING the last five months I have paid particular attention to the works going on at an addition to the *Palais de Justice* now being erected in Paris. Unlike our tedious and expensive manner, the French merely shape the stone to the rough contour of the mouldings previously to setting, as wood is prepared by carpenters for the moulding plane; this meets the contingencies incidental to hoisting and other movements, the value of the material being very little increased by the labour expended on it. It also gives the facility of applying the building to its intended purpose in a much shorter time, and, in the case of a paucity of funds, of finishing the more expensive dressings at a future period. Many of the buildings in Paris which to the eye of a casual observer are completed, still demand the expenditure of large sums for the finishing sculptures.

When the entire façade of a building is carried up to the blocking course of the crowning entablature, the dressing is commenced, and is finished in stages, generally beginning at the top. The first operation is performed with a hammer, the face of which is indented by deep lines crossing each other at right angles, thus forming a series of teeth; with this instrument the workman strikes evenly over the surface of the stone. Sometimes a sharp-edged hammer is used, cutting the surface by an oblique blow. Afterwards a scrape in the form of a veneering hammer is applied, and the ashlaring is finished.

For the moulded and sunk work the usual cutting tools are used, and, in addition, a series of rebate-planes, having the irons set to a high pitch. It is astonishing with what rapidity they finish entablatures of the most difficult description. Other advantages are also derived from this method,—for instance, mitres, raking and circular mouldings, panelled soffits, and every description of foliated work, can be executed with the highest degree of accuracy and perfection. M. M.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AT SHEFFIELD: ST. MARIE'S.

THIS building, recently dedicated, occupies nearly half the north side of Norfolk-row, Sheffield. The first stone was laid on the 25th March, 1847. It is a cross church, in the Decorated style, and has a tower and spire at the south-west corner. The dimensions are as follow:—

			Ft.	In.
The total internal length from the east to the west wall within			143	7
The chancel being	long	38 2		
The nave being	long	105 5		
The breadth of the nave is			24	8
The breadth of the aisles is	north.		18	0
	south.		17	0
The greatest breadth across the transepts is			82	8
Nave from floor to ridge			51	10
Chancel from floor to ridge			48	4
The tower is, up to the parapet	high		92	5
The spire is, up to the cross	high		95	4
And the cross and vane is	high		8	1
Total height			195	8

It contains 1,000 seats.

The *Sheffield Times* gives a long description of the building, from which we learn, amongst other things, that the chancel is fitted up with great splendour, and presents a reredos and altar, a rood-screen and loft, sedilia, founder's tomb, with effigy and hearse, stone and metal parcloses, oak stalls, with poppy-heads and panellings, a richly-inlaid floor, and over all a richly-decorated roof. The altar, built up of fair hewn stone, supports, detached from the eastern wall, the tabernacle. The door is of enamelled metal, set amidst enriched mouldings and panelling, whilst on either side are minute statuettes of angels, "harping on their harps." In the eastern wall is the reredos. The centre is panelled in geometric panelling to the extent of the altar; and then at either end in four sunk panels, two in each, are eight images of angels bearing representations of the instruments and emblems of the Passion. Beneath these figures are small quatrefoils, with the sculptured vine, and an open cresting and cornice form the upper line of the dossal beneath the east window. In the panes of this window, "richly dight," are depicted the principal events of the life of the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the church.

The baptistry is raised by an ascent of three steps above the level of the nave, and stands beneath the tower. In the centre of the baptistry stands the font; it is of an octagonal form, borne up by a cluster of shafts with caps and bases, and an arrangement of angels below the bowl holding books. The eight sides of the bowl of the font are sunk in square panels, and contain sculptures of the seven sacraments and the Crucifixion.

The parties associated in the erection of the edifice under the direction of Messrs. Weightman and Hadfield, the architects, are:—

Contractor for the building and masons' work, Mr. Gregory; for the carpenters' work, Mr. Hayball. The decoration of the chancel-

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